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HIGH-LEVEL COMMITTEE OF
MINISTERS AND OFFICIALS
Second meeting
Nairobi, 2-4 March 1998
Item 4 of the provisional agenda*

UNEP REFORM IN THE CONTEXT OF UNITED NATIONS REFORM

Elements for a draft decision of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme concerning the role of the United Nations Environment Programme within the context of reform of the United Nations

Note by the Acting Chairperson

1. I have the pleasure to submit to you herewith elements for a draft decision of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) concerning the role of UNEP within the context of reform of the United Nations.

2. This document has been prepared by the Bureau of the High-level Committee of Ministers and Officials in order to facilitate discussions within the Committee on UNEP reform in the context of United Nations reform.

3. The Committee may wish to decide at its second meeting whether any such draft decision should be forwarded to the Governing Council for consideration at the upcoming special session. In the event that the Committee deems it appropriate to proceed along these lines, it would then have to consider the possible content of the draft decision.

4. I hope you will agree with me that it is the role of the Bureau to come forward with clear and at times even provocative proposals in order to stimulate the political debate among the participants in the High-level Committee of Ministers and Officials.

5. I look forward to meeting you soon in Nairobi and to working with you towards our common goal of reconfirming UNEP as the principal United Nations body in the field of environment and as an authoritative advocate for the global environment.

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* UNEP/HLC/2/1 and Corr.1.

Annex

ELEMENTS FOR A DRAFT RESOLUTION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL OF THE UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME CONCERNING THE ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF REFORM OF THE UNITED NATIONS

The Governing Council,

Recalling that the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21, adopted by the General Assembly at its nineteenth special session (General Assembly resolution S-19/2, annex), affirms that the role of the United Nations Environment Programme as the principal United Nations body in the field of environment should be further enhanced,

Recalling also the report of the Secretary-General of 14 July 1997 entitled "Renewing the United Nations: a programme for reform" (A/51/950), and, in particular, its chapter V, section D, on environment, habitat and sustainable development, and General Assembly resolution 52/12 of 12 November 1997,

Further recalling the Nairobi Declaration on the Role and Mandate of the United Nations Environment Programme adopted by the Governing Council in its decision 19/1 of 7 February 1997,

Concerned by the fragmentation of environmental authority across the United Nations system,

Convinced of the need to improve the consistency among the activities within the United Nations system by strengthening the environmental net by means of an increase in service efficiency, political coherence and operational synergies,

Seeking to reinforce the position of the United Nations Environment Programme within the United Nations system through stronger political support and a better legal, institutional and financial basis,

Requests the Secretary-General and the General Assembly to take into account, when considering and elaborating new means for strengthening and reconstructing the United Nations Environment Programme, the following policy elements:

(a) Reinforcement of the position of the United Nations Environment Programme:

(i) The United Nations Environment Programme should be transformed into a global environmental organization, whose name could be the United Nations Environment Organization, with the status of a United Nations specialized agency;

(ii) The Governing Council should be transformed into a universal governing body, seconded by a High-level Committee of Ministers adn Officials with representatives of all regional groups;

(iii) The Executive Director's position should become that of Director-General and be a member of the senior management board of the United Nations;

(iv) The Executive Director should be fully empowered to implement any measures decided upon by the Governing Council regarding the organization and staffing to carry out the renewed mandate of the organization;

(b) Enhancement of consistency:

(i) The position of the United Nations Environment Programme as the leading global environmental authority has to be confirmed and fully implemented by the necessary organizational and legal decisions within the United Nations system;

(ii) The United Nations Environment Programme, as the focal point for all environmental activities within the United Nations system, should be consulted about all environmental activities throughout the United Nations bodies;

(iii) The United Nations Environment Programme should participate in the elaboration of strategies within the United Nations system in order to ensure their compatibility with environmental policies in the overall context of sustainable development;

(iv) The United Nations Environment Programme should be the leading authority for supervising the secretariats of the multilateral environmental agreements, such as the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer and the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, and future international environmental agreements;

(c) Capacity and efficiency. A new financing system that ensures adequate and predictable financing of the United Nations Environment Programme should be elaborated. Part of that system could be:

(i) Improvement of efficiency through concentration and coordination of tasks;

(ii) Increase in the contribution to the United Nations Environment Programme from the United Nations regular budget;

(iii) Introduction of assessed contributions from the Member States to cover the core budget;

(iv) Pledges for voluntary contributions.